

**TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**



**FISCAL NOTE**

**HB 681 - SB 646**

March 30, 2009

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** Grants counties the authority to create a unified family court pilot program by selecting one court to serve as a unified family court for a period of 24 months if approved by a majority of the county legislative body. The county must select an entity to conduct an independent study of the program and report the preliminary findings and final results to the Governor, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the General Assembly, and the county legislative body on an annual basis with the initial report due one year after the selection of the court. The provisions of the bill will sunset on July 1, 2013, unless reenacted or extended.

**ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:**

**State Expenditures – Not Expenditures – Not Significant**

**Increase Local Expenditures – Exceeds \$150,000/Permissive**

Assumptions:

- Any county that chooses to participate in the program will incur an increase in expenditures for salary and benefits for personnel required to administer the program.
- Counties participating in the program will also incur an increase in expenditures to contract with an entity to provide an independent study of the program.
- Each county choosing to participate in the pilot program is estimated to incur a permissive increase in expenditures exceeding \$150,000.
- According to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), state trial courts could experience a small decrease in the number of cases. Any decrease in resources will not be significant.
- The Departments of Human Services and Children's Services will not incur a significant impact on expenditures as a result of changes to the court in which cases are heard. Any cost can be accommodated within existing resources without an increased appropriation or reduced reversion.

**HB 681 - SB 646**

- Additional district attorney and public defender resources may be needed in a county that chooses to participate in the pilot program. Additional assistant district attorney, district attorney general, or public defender positions cannot be created or funded absent statutory authorization. This bill does not authorize the creation of more positions.

**CERTIFICATION:**

This is to duly certify that the information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James W. White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "White".

James W. White, Executive Director

/kml